

TOWN OF PLYMOUTH

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2026 MAR 25 PM 2:30


TOWN CLERK

Public Works Board

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**Minutes – Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Assembly Room, Plymouth Town Hall, 5:45 PM**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nate Brown at 5:45 pm on March 24, 2026, in the Plymouth Town Hall Assembly Room, 80 Main Street, Terryville, CT

Roll Call: Members in attendance were Chairman Nate Brown, Vice Chairman Joe Carey, Peter Giancesini, Mark Lewandoski, George Castle, Joe Sopczneski – Public Works Director, Aaron Heller – Highway Superintendent, TJ Zagurski – Town Council, Vicky Carey – Board of Finance, and Linda Konopaske – Acting recording secretary.

Fire Exit Notification: Notice given by Chairman Brown.

Pledge of allegiance: Led by Chairman Brown.

Acceptance of previous meetings minutes: The Chairman asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the February 24, 2026, meeting. Joe Carey requested a correction to the first sentence, noting that it incorrectly stated the meeting was called to order at both 6:45 PM and 5:45 PM, with the 6:45 PM being identified as a misprint. Chairman Brown acknowledged the correction.

Motion: Joe Carey moved to approve the minutes of February 24th as amended. Mark Lewandoski seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Monthly Reports: Public Works Director Joseph Sopczneski:

Administrative

- He announced that Aaron Heller had been hired as the new highway superintendent and was in attendance at the meeting and then reported that two open positions in the highway crew would be posted on Indeed.
- Regarding the MS4 report, he stated he was still working with NVCOG to make updates, noting they had provided good guidance for both short-term improvements and actions throughout the rest of the year. The 2025 report would be posted on April 1st.
- The OSHA report was underway with most abatements completed. The remaining items were predominantly training, procedure, and documentation issues. He was working with compliance consultants and OSHA-provided consultants to finish the process. He has also been working through budget submissions to the board of finance and addressing questions.

Highway

- Winter cleanup is underway, including repair of broken curbs, pothole patching, and road sweeping which began the previous week. Training was performed on the sweeper for new operators. He reported they would address the drainage issue at the highway garage that was part of the salt shed compliance, noting that some pipe work needed repair. When asked whether this would be done in-house or subcontracted, he confirmed they would do it themselves.

Highway Projects

- With Aaron Heller starting on Monday, Director Sopczneski explained they would confirm the road schedule and plan to initiate the road bond work. They would prepare roads ahead of time with tree work and drainage and planned to release a schedule for the work. The Chairman confirmed this pertained to finishing up the farms project and included bridge engineering and design work. He confirmed they could extend the paving contract with Cocchiola and was getting updates on escalation costs. The drainage subcontracting work would need to go back out to bid.
- The Torrey Crossing LOTCIP application was underway with NVCOG having reviewed their application with notes. NVCOG would give their approval at a meeting on April 1st with the entire NVCOG board.

Transfer Station

- Director Sopczneski announced they would decommission the compactor as repair costs had become prohibitive. The estimate from Reedville Hydraulics was \$100,000 with a two-year lead time. They would salvage electric motors and other parts from the compactor. The solution would be to switch to high-top trailers set up along the retaining wall so residents could throw trash directly into them. This was described as a short-term solution requiring trailer rentals, with exploration needed for buying versus continuing to rent. He noted they could look to sell the compactor trailers they currently have, including the recently purchased one, to help offset transition costs. They would need to construct coverage for the trailers for rain protection and reorganize the transfer station layout.
- Joe Carey inquired about the cost of a totally new compaction system, which Joe Sopczneski said had not been explored yet. George Castle asked about returning to curbside trash collection, with Director Sopczneski acknowledging this was part of the long-term considerations to take pressure off the transfer station. The frequency of emptying high-top trailers would determine how many needed to be kept on hand, and they were considering how many days the transfer station should be open.
- George Castle asked about the timeline for repairs, with Director Sopczneski clarifying they expected to be operational with the new trailer system by the end of the week, not repairing the compactor. Discussion ensued about tipping fees, and he explained fees are paid by weight, so they would move trailers more often with less weight, potentially incurring more hauling fees but maintaining the same disposal rate.
- CWPM had been loaning trailers during the transition period and would set up a rental agreement. Plans included removing the compactor and hood, and parking trucks parallel to the retaining wall with fall protection using Jersey barriers. He noted they had appropriate

height barriers (42 inches required, they had 44-inch barriers available) and discussed the need for curb stops and painted lanes for organization.

- Discussion occurred about the marketability of the recently purchased compactor trailer, with Joe Carey noting concerns about its compatibility with their obsolete compactor system. However, he believed the trailer had significant resale value as similar systems were used by other entities, requiring only door modifications.
- The brush dump grinding RFP had been posted with bids coming in. The brush dump would open on April 4th with a walkthrough on April 6th.

Town Hall

- Director Sopczneski reported making repairs with a major issue being the coil and heat exchanger in the attic that has been repaired multiple times. It was last repaired on 3/21/26 with sections cut out and new fittings pressed in rather than just soldering, which should last longer. He is looking into replacement costs for the coil.

Old Business: The Chairman opened discussion on the new Public Works Policy entitled “Use of proceeds from sale of surplus property” that had been distributed the previous month. He noted the policy would need to go to the board of finance and town council for review and approval, explaining that money allocated for equipment purchases should return to public works when equipment is sold. Joe Carey noted there were two drafts and wanted to incorporate language from one draft requiring that surplus equipment be documented and approved by the Public Works Director before sale. He preferred this language be added to ensure director approval of surplus items.

Motion: Joe Carey moved to approve the policy with the changes incorporating the added language under Disposition of Assets and Surplus Declaration: Any equipment, vehicle, or material deemed surplus must be documented and approved by the DPW Director before sale. George Castle seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Joe Carey asked about final tabulation of costs for Crestview and Mountain View Road drainage projects. Director Sopczneski confirmed he knew where to find the information but hadn't compiled it yet requiring review of individual invoices to separate costs. Regarding outstanding obligations, he confirmed all billing had been submitted and paid to his knowledge.

New Business: No new business was discussed.

Public Comment

Steve Sauvron from 7 Crestview Road asked about core samples for the farms project to avoid delays experienced on Crestview Road. Joe Sopczneski confirmed they would do preliminary investigation, noting that recent groundwater issues on Tumblebrook Road gave them insight into subsurface conditions and they could do similar investigations in other areas before starting.

TJ Zagurski suggested trying to sell the compactor trailers quickly, especially the new one, to avoid depreciation and provide revenue for rental costs. He recommended contacting the sales representative who sold the equipment and suggested it shouldn't go to auction due to being brand new. The speaker also suggested looking at other paving contractors besides Cocchiola mentioning issues with seam quality and road durability. They noted other contractors as alternatives. Discussion occurred about

the VIP list for the capital region, with Joe Sopczneski noting he didn't think anyone had submitted bids. He also emphasized the need to look into alternative trash collection as the current system wouldn't be sustainable long-term. Several other contractors were discussed as potential options.

Vicky Carey from the board of finance announced that Monday's meeting would review capital projects, including \$100,000 allocated for the transfer station compaction system (\$50,000 already allocated plus \$50,000 for trailers in year 3 of 4). She noted these items would need to be retooled given the change in plans. She clarified that the draft policy must go to town council first before the board of finance, and that capital project presentations were welcome at Monday's meeting.

Joe Carey asked about capital project scoring changes due to reallocation, with George Castle and Vicky Carey confirming the priority ranking should remain the same despite heading changes. Vicky also noted that most capital items were in year 2 or 3, with the mayor having selected specific items for his budget including actual figures for roads, town aid, LOTCIP, and municipal grants.

Administrative Business:

Joe Carey brought up an unresolved issue with Walter Drzonsc on Harwinton Avenue whose driveway was damaged during road construction. Money was authorized in October/November (\$5,000) for repairs by a private contractor (Diesel Paving), but only binder was applied to get through winter rather than final paving. He wanted to ensure follow-up to complete the work to the resident's satisfaction and asked Director Sopczneski to contact the resident and inspect the work with the new superintendent Aaron Heller.

Board Member Comments:

Peter Gianesini raised the ongoing issue with potholes in the post office driveway on Riverside Avenue, noting they were getting worse and creating safety hazards. This was the same issue raised the previous year that had been addressed, but the potholes had returned.

Joe Carey asked Joe Sopczneski to work with Aaron Heller to find a solution for putting their hot box back in commission, suggesting it needed a trailer for mobility. However, other commissioners questioned the value, noting the hot box holds only 2 tons while they typically use 4 tons per day for pothole repair. Discussion ensued about the practicality versus cost, with some suggesting selling the equipment rather than investing more money in modifications. The conversation covered current practices of using mason trucks to transport hot asphalt from plants, the cooling issues with unheated bodies, and the potential need for heated truck bodies to maintain asphalt temperature.

Chairman Brown asked about annual asphalt usage for pothole repair, but Director Sopczneski did not have the figure readily available. Discussion occurred about plant openings, with confirmation that several plants have recently opened for the season.

Adjournment:

Motion: George Castle moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 pm, second by Mark Lewandoski.

Motion passed unanimously.



Linda Konopaske, Acting Recording Secretary